

**DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING**

**Monday, September 21, 2009 – 5:00p.m.**

**Mayor's Reception Room**

**Room 405, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor City Hall**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Michele Gordon; Warner Wirta; Toni Dickenson; Joy Dorscher; Ron Boshey; Bea Kitto; Renee Van Nett

**EXCUSED:** Ricky DeFoe; Donna Bluebird; Donna Ennis

**CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Meeting called to order at 5:10 pm by sub-chair, Ron Boshey. Agenda was approved with the change under old business by Warner Wirta, item B, added, regarding Spirit Mountain.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 17, 2009 MEETING:**

**Minutes approved by commissioners.**

**COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM/OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

Donovan Strong introduced himself and spoke. He is currently working with Melanie Ford, the County Attorney, on JDAI issues. This involves working with detention minority confinement issues. The goal is to try to reduce the numbers of minority youth in detention in St. Louis County. Mr. Strong passed out his card to commission members. He can be reached at 218-753-4770 or 218-750-7257. His email address is: [d.strong@strongenterprises.org](mailto:d.strong@strongenterprises.org). Tony LaDeaux did sit on this committee, along with Donna Ennis, and so we can now look at someone else from the commission to sit on this committee. Renee Van Nett said she would volunteer to sit on this committee with Donna Ennis now.

Mr. Strong also let the commission know that there is a vacant seat of the ICWA state representatives. Secretary of State has this position open. Three urban Native people are being sought. No compensation except for mileage is offered. On-line applications are available at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) and click on "appointments". Mr. Strong would like to have the commission recommend someone to apply for this from this community.

Melanie Ford, also present at tonight's meeting, and Donovan Strong will send lists of the committee meetings and the goals of these committees to Keith Hamre's office to pass on to the Commissioners. They will also come each month to give us a report on these committees.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**AICHO's Gimaajii (YWCA Housing/ Indian Center Report –**

Sherry Sanchez Tibbetts Fundraising continues. The project is just shy of starting construction, Ms. Sanches-Tibbetts reports. The project is finally going to close. Fine-tuning is now happening so the construction can begin. The building has been looked

at by many agencies that are all supportive. Volunteer opportunities are going to be happening so the lead and asbestos team can go through. Volunteers are being asked to help take things down, etc. Krause-Anderson is the general contractor. Separate lead and asbestos people are going to do that work. Ms. Sanchez-Tibbetts did not have their name. She will let Keith Hamre's office know the name of the people to do the lead and asbestos work. Historic tax credits are available for businesses to bid upon, and AICHO is awaiting the finalizing for these bids. Ms. Sanchez-Tibbetts feels things will begin in October, with the lead and asbestos work, and construction to begin in November. This could be an optimistic view, and things could be slower, she said. When there is a final closing date, we will be notified. Toni Dickenson is now on the AICHO board.

### **Spirit Mountain Letter to the Commission -**

Warner Wirta let the commission know that he has written an article regarding what he has envisioned to be on Spirit Mountain. He would like to see a Native person sitting on the Spirit Mountain board. Mr. Wirta shared the article/ letter he wrote tonight with the commission and the community present.

Ron Boshey suggested that we invite those running for city council to attend our meeting so we can ask them questions regarding Native issues, such as Spirit Mountain. Commissioners agreed to invite these people to our next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Dakota and Ojibwe Language Revitalization Group –**

John Day brought along material for the commissioners to read. The Minnesota Indian Affairs office contacted Mr. Day regarding legislation about Dakota and Ojibwe language in the public schools. They are putting together a working group which will consist of one member from each of the 11 tribes in MN, St. Paul and Duluth. Mr. Day was asked to recruit someone from Duluth to be part of this group. They are seeking someone from Duluth who knows the Ojibwe or Dakota language, and could perform the 10 duties listed on the materials that Mr. Day passed out to the commissioners (see attached). (VOLUNTEER WORKING GROUP ON DAKOTA AND OJIBWE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION AND PRESERVATION.) Members of this group will receive no compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses. John is asking that commissioners contact Anna Marie Hill at 651-296-0041, or himself, with ideas of any individuals who may be qualified and interested in being a part of this group.

John Day's email address is: [jday@d.umn.edu](mailto:jday@d.umn.edu). He can be reached by phone at 218-726-7971.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Warner Wirta again shared about the letter he has written regarding Spirit Mountain. (enclosed).

Joy Dorscher shared research regarding “what is an American Indian”. In 1997, Office of Management and Budget, decided a definition based on treaties and political interactions to “any indigenous peoples of North and South America”. Thus, if South Americans are part of a tribe in their land, they are counted as “American Indians”. This can affect data regarding Native people here in North America. This is important to us as Indian people. It should not be up to the federal government. It should be up to Indian people to say who is an American Indian or not. This definition was decided upon without tribal reflection. She has brought this up to Al Franken. Joy also asked for prayers for her mother, who is dealing with cancer right now.

Renee Van Nett asked about how the Feast and Forum went. She had been dealing with her brother’s death at that time, she reported, and was not present.

Ron Boshey reported on the forum, and how Tony LaDeaux’s death overshadowed this event. However, he reported, things went very well, and it was well attended. One thing mentioned was how do community members get ahold of the commissioners via phone, etc.

Toni Dickenson will have her first board meeting with AICHO this week. She reported being excited about this and getting to know how things are going with this agency.

Bea Kitto had an announcement on a Million Mom March Event – two of these – Friday, Sept. 15 at 5 to 6pm at The Suites Hotel at 326 Lake Avenue. Refreshments and guest speakers. Bea has emailed this notice to commissioners.

Michele Gordon reported her brother, Terry, and his wife, were here from Texas.

Ron Boshey reported a Mide ceremony happening at Bois Forte, which has not been since 1947. His brother came back with him from that area and has been spending time with him. He also stressed getting the new people running for council.

Ricky DeFoe, who arrived late, shared that Donna Bluebird is in the hospital with a collapsed lung at St. Mary’s hospital. He also mentioned how this is the first meeting since Tony LaDeaux passed on to the Spirit World. A warrior is gone.

**NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION:**

October 19, 2009 - Room 405 in City Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting was adjourned by Sub-Chair, Ron Boshey, at 6:40pm.